b)   using a <u>stega-cipher</u> [random or pseudo-random key] to steganographically decode independent information including a digital watermark form the carrier signal.

<center>REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION</center>

Applicant has amended claims 25 and 29, in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim that which Applicant regards as the invention. No new matter is introduced by these amendments, and these amendments are fully supported by the specification. Claims 25-65 are pending. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

<center>REMARKS</center>

At the outset, Applicant would like to thank Examiner Swann and Examiner Meislahn for the courtesy extended to Applicant's representatives during a interview conducted at the United States Patent and Trademark Office on December 13, 2000. During the interview, Applicant's representatives argued that Schneier did not anticipate independent claims 25 and 29 because Schneier discloses encryption, not steganography. Therefore, Applicant's representatives maintained that the rejection of these claims was improper.

After considerable discussion with the examiners, Examiner Swann suggested amending claims 25 and 29 to recite that the key is a "steganographic key." After considering this suggestion, Applicant has amended claims 25 and 29 to recite "using a stega-cipher to steganographically" encode or decode independent information. Support for this amendment may be found on page 7 of the application:

> The invention draws on techniques from two fields, cryptography, the art of scrambling messages so that only the intended recipient may read them, and steganography, a term applied to various techniques for obscuring messages so that only the intended parties to a message even know that a message has been sent, thus it is termed herein as a stega-cipher. The stega-cipher is so named because it uses the steganographic technique of hiding a message in multimedia content, in combination with multiple keys, a concept originating in cryptography. However, instead of using the keys to encrypt the content, the stega-cipher uses these keys to locate the hidden message within the content. The message itself is encrypted which serves to further protect the message, verify the validity of the message, and redistribute the information in a random manner so that anyone

attempting to locate the message without the keys cannot rely on pre-supposed knowledge of the message contents as a help in locating it.

Application at 7. Therefore, in view of this amendment, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 25 and 29, and all claims dependent therefrom, is no longer appropriate, and respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

In addition, claims 62 and 63 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2, as allegedly being indefinite for using the term "imperceptible." Applicant notes, however, that one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize and understand the meaning of the term as being perceptible to a human. In addition, the term is defined in the specification. See Page 13, Lines 1-2 ("The value of the stega-cipher is that it provides a way to watermark the content in a way that changes it slightly, but does not impact human perception significantly."(emphasis added)). Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection also be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicant's representative, either by telephone or in person, would further the prosecution of this application, we would welcome the opportunity for such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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